

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1- 14. (Cancelled)

15. (Currently amended) An isolated expression construct comprising the following operably linked elements: a transcriptional promoter; a nucleic acid sequence that encodes the polypeptide encoded by SEQ ID NO:25 ~~encoding an ancestor or COT protein~~; and a transcriptional terminator.

16-18. (Cancelled)

19. (Original) The expression construct of claim 15, wherein the transcriptional promoter is a heterologous promoter.

20. (Original) The expression construct of claim 19, wherein the promoter is a cytomegalovirus promoter.

21. (Original) A cultured prokaryotic or eukaryotic cell transformed or transfected with the expression construct of claim 15.

22. (Original) The eukaryotic cell of claim 21, which is a mammalian cell.

23 - 24. (Cancelled)

25. (Original) The prokaryotic cell of claim 21, which is an E. coli cell.
26. (Original) The eukaryotic cell of claim 21, which is an S. cerevisiae cell.
27. (Original) The eukaryotic cell of claim 21, which is a human cell.
28. (Original) A vector comprising the expression construct of claim 15.
29. (Original) The vector of claim 28, wherein the nucleic acid sequence is operably linked to a Semliki Forest Virus replicon, and wherein the resulting recombinant replicon is operably linked to a cytomegalovirus promoter.
30. (Original) An isolated host cell comprising the vector of claim 28.
- 31-44. (Cancelled)
45. (Currently amended) An isolated COT viral gene sequence, ~~and fragments thereof, wherein the sequence is a determined sequence of a highly diverse viral strain, subtype or group,~~ wherein the sequence is at least 70% identical to SEQ ID NO:25.
46. (Currently amended) The COT viral gene sequence of claim 45, wherein the COT viral gene sequence is at least 90% identical to SEQ ID NO:25 ~~an HIV-1 viral gene sequence, an HIV-2 viral gene sequence, or a Hepatitis C viral gene sequence.~~
47. (Cancelled)
48. (Currently amended) The COT viral gene sequence of claim 45, wherein the COT viral sequence ~~[[has]] is at least 95% identical to SEQ ID NO:25 70% identity with an~~

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~~LScot or MMeot sequence set forth in FIGS. 9 to 17 or 27 to 35~~, and wherein the sequence does not have 100% identity with any circulating variant.

49-62. (Cancelled)

63. (New) The COT viral gene sequence of claim 45, wherein the COT viral sequence comprises SEQ ID NO:25